THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM): Now Shri Kondaiah, not here. We now take up further discussion on the Hamdloom Weavers (Viable Working Conditions and other Welfare Measures) Bill, 1998, moved by Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy.

THE HANDLOOM WEAVERS (VIABLE WORKING CONDITIONS AND OTHER WELFARE MEASURES) BILL, 1998 (contd.)

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY(Andhra Paradesh) : Sir, this morning, we had some discussion arising out of a Special Mention, on the handloom industry, but because the scope was not much and the scope for discussion on a Bill is much wider, I would like to go into some other aspects of this Bill. Also, yesterday, a delegation from all over the country had come to Delhi and met the Prime Minister and gave a memorandum to save the handloom industry because of the threat to the handloom industry arising out of the recent Satyam Committee's report.

And handloom industry is the second largest vocational activity after agriculture in our country. It is estimated that 125 lakh families live on handloom industry. If we have one family on an average consisting of four or five members, we find that roughly about a population of five crores is living on handloom industry. This industry is mostly in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Sir, this industry has a long history of exporting cloth to foreign countries, earning good foreign exchange and also producing extraordinarily high quality of handloom. For centuries together our artisans had been producing such a fine cloth about which people even today say and take pride that a saree could be put into a matchbox. Such fine artisans we had and such high traditions we had in our handloom industry. Even today we take pride in the artisans of our country. Unfortunately, now this industry is in a danger. I will just trace out the history. In 1945 itself this danger was thought of by the then Government and an All India Handloom Board was set up. In 1954, after we had attained Independence, another committee called Kanoongo Committee was constituted. This Committee after going into the intricacies of the industry, had advocated support both to the handloom industry as well as to the powerloom industry. After 20 years the Government set up another committee headed by Shri Sivaraman and this Committee was known as Sivaraman Committee. Then we had a committee called the Abid Hussain Committee. These Committees went into the plight of the

handloom industry and together they recommended two particular things, one is reservation of 22 varieties of cloth for the handloom sector and the second important recommendation was with regard to the supply of hankyarn to the handloom industry. These were two very important recommendations made by the Sivaraman Committee. After taking into account all this, the Committee noted that for every individual who is taken into the powerloom industry, 24 people lose their job from the handloom industry. That is the damage that the powerloom had done to the handloom industry. So, this Committee had gone into the depth of this matter and made their valuable recommendations along with these two recommendations that we have dealt with. We had also a policy in 1985 which the Government declared as the 1985 Policy on Handloom. This also resulted in the enactment of an Act called the Reservation Act which facilitated reservation of certain items for the handloom sector. Under this Act the hank yarn that was to be given to the handloom sector was categorised. After that some vested interests at that time approached the Supreme Court against these two recommendations, 1985 Policy and the Reservation Act. But fortunately, the Supreme Court endorsed the position taken by the Government and the Committee. It said that the powerloom industry had been proliferating in spite of dampening orders given by the Government. Finally the Government came in and regularised five lakh powerlooms in our country which had brought a lot of damage to the handloom industry.

Then, after twenty years i.e., after 1974, another Committee called the Meera Sethi Committee was constituted. It had also recommended reservation of 11 varieties instead of 22 varieties. The number of items reserved was coming down. That is the reason why I am placing it before you. The earlier Committees recommended reservation of 22 varieties, but the Meera Sethi Committee recommended reservation of only 11 varieties to the handloom industry. Sir, even that was not implemented correctly. And, in 1998, another Committee was constituted headed by one Mr. S.R. Satyam. He was a retired Secretary in the Ministry of Textiles. Unfortunately, had some other person been heading this Committee, he would have shown a little conscience and, probably, a little social sense. But, this Committee did not show that. I am sorry to say that. It had neither the conscience nor the social sense which we expect from a Committee like that. Therefore, this Committee had submitted its report

and, recently, the Ministry informed the House, in some other context, that the recommendations of this Committee are under the active consideration of the Ministry. The net result or the essence of the report of the Committee - some people have mentioned and some articles also have appeared in a number of newspapers - is, the report will ring a death-knell to the handloom sector. We can say that in one sentence. And, it is a wise and an intelligent arrangement for a funeral ceremony of the handloom sector. These are the comments made by some of the commentators on this Report. These things have come in the background of the GATT Agreement. Some of the important recommendations are like this. The first one is, removal of every existing supporting system given to the handloom sector; the second one is, removal of reservation facility by scrapping the Reservation Act which I had mentioned earlier; the third important point of this Committee's recommendations is, removal of the existing compulsory production of hank yarn by mills, thus, totally starving this handloom sector due to non-availability of yarn. The fourth point is, withdrawal of excise duty exemption. Sir, there was an exemption from the excise duty and now, they wanted to withdraw it. All the support systems are now withdrawn due to the recommendations of this Committee

The Committee identified three types of cloth that is produced by the textile sector. Traditionally, we categorised this industry into co-operative sector, the master-weaver sector and the handloom sector. But, now, this has taken another type of categorisation. The categorisation is like this. The first one is, exclusively high value-added cloth that is produced; the second category is, medium-priced cloth that is produced; and the third one is, plain, low-cost cloth that is produced. That is how they have categorised the textile cloth that is produced. One of the recommendations, after this categorisation, is to see that the third category is taken up to the second category and the second category is taken up to the first category by improving the skills of the workers who are engaged in these particular sectors of industry. The upgradation of the skill is an uphill and a massive task, that too with no provision of monetary and technical support. And this Committee had no word about this technical support. These are the three types of cloth produced. But, particularly, the third type of cloth in this categorisation is produced by the handloom sector. It provides clothing for the poor sections which cannot afford a high-priced product. One commentator had pointed out and I quote, "Despite its

handloom buyers, the policy continues to speak of social objectives. Thus, its objectives are stated to be one of increasing the production of cloth of acceptable quality at reasonable prices to meet the clothing requirements of the growing population, while keeping the employment potential in view." This is the objective of the previous Committee which, this Committee, has conveniently ignored that is, production of cloth of acceptable quality, at reasonable prices, to meet the clothing requirement of the growing population, while keeping the employment potential in view. So, this objection of the previous committee has totally been forgotten, has totally been kept aside, and a new set of recommendations has been provided. This is the result of free market competitive economy, which, probably, means survival of the fittest, survival of the most cunning, and survival of the richest. This is the free economy that we are seeing now. It has also recommended research and development, information technology - which is the obsession of the day, and the national handloom mart. These are another three recommendations that have been made, but there is no mention as to who will provide all these things to this sector. No doubt, the scheme is very grand and fanciful, but it is not based on ground realities. It is only a starry height. Even the Government does not purchase handloom cloth for its own departments. That is the state of affairs today. The Janata Cloth Scheme has been shelved in almost all the States. The welfare measures are inadequate and are not properly implemented. The net result is, famine deaths. In my own State, Andhra Pradesh, there are a number of reports regarding the famine deaths of people coming from the handloom industry. During the last few years, there have also been reports of suicides by the people belonging to the families of handloom weavers. So, in the background, my final request is, scrap the Satyam Committee's Report, enhance the welfare measures, revive the Janata Cloth Scheme, arrange the supply of hank yarn to this sector. The Bill - providing for a welfare fund -- is very laudable. The Government should provide a core fund of Rs. Five crores, and suggest means of enhancing the fund. So, these are the recommendations that I would like to make. With this, I support the Bill. Thank you very much.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I rise to support the Bill. The problems of handloom weavers have been felt in Tamil Nadu also. Late Annadurai, the doyen of the Dravidian Movement, while he was a Rajya Sabha Member from 1962 to 1967, had raised his voice about the

plight of the handloom weavers. He had also suggested several measures which the Central Government and the State Government should adopt with a view to alleviating their problems. As it is said, in most places of Tamil Nadu, nearly 20-25 per cent of the population is engaged in handloom weaving. But they are not able to compete with the powerloom sector. They are not able to produce a fine variety so that people may be attracted to purchase handloom cloth. The result is, whatever they produce, is not marketed and not sold, and the workers are starving. In order to save them from starvation, the Central Government and the State Government must come forward with some measures, and reserve some items for. the handloom sector. Just as 11 items have been reserved for the handloom sector, in the same way, certain more items should be assigned to the handloom sector only, and those items should not be encroached upon by the powerloom sector.

It should be specially made available to them. The Central Government and the State Government should directly purchase it from them and market it. If it is not marketed by the Government, subsidy should be there. The Government should come forward to provide a substantial price for these goods, to safeguard these people. As a matter of fact, the Central Government is providing only 2% subsidy for the purchase through the National Handloom Development Corporation.

Sir, there is a demand from the people that it should be increased to 25%. They are also demanding the establishment of a separate bank to meet the financial requirements of these handloom weavers. Sir, there was one committee as has also been said by Mr. Radhakrishna Murty called the Mira Seth Committee which had recommended the setting up of a National Handloom Credit Fund, with a corpus of Rs. 500 crores. Sir, my request is that this should be set up immediately. These poor people should be given interest-free loans; and also holiday period in the repayment of loans should be given to them. Several other measures should also be adopted to save these people. I request this hon. House to urge upon the Central and the State Governments to provide proper infrastructure and the latest technology - the absence of which is affecting the local textile industry - to safeguard these handloom weavers. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY(Tamil Nadu) : Sir, the Members should come forward to purchase handloom dresses. They are always wearing terry-cotton or terry-loom.

3.00 P.M.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM) : This is a good suggestion.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, Tamil Nadu is the only State in India where, throughout the year, rebate is being given on the handloom purchases.

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI (Uttar Pradesh) : Sir, thank you for this opportunity. The Bill entitled, "The Handloom Weavers (Viable Working Conditions and other Welfare Measures) Bill, 1998" which has been moved by our colleague, Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy, is an extremely welcome measure. Sir, I would like to mention that, broadly, there are two aspects of it. One is : we have to see as to how we can make this handloom industry economically viable. The other thing that we have to see is, if they are in difficulties, what kind of an assistance can be provided to them so that this very important section of the community is not put to a disadvantaged position. Sir, this is a country-wide problem. Traditionally -- and historically also - this handloom industry is a very important industry in this country. I do not want to go into the question of pride that we have always taken in the delicacies and other wonderful things that this handloom industry has produced in this country all these years. This has been a very famous industry. I would like to mention that apart from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, this industry is also flourishing in other States like Orissa and Rajasthan. It occupies a pivotal position in our economic life.

Sir, despite the fact that from the First Five-Year Plan and till the Eighth Five-Year Plan, we are finding that there are always some suggestions, some measures, for promoting handloom, giving protection and trying to see as to how greater marketing can be done, yet it is unfortunate that nothing much has been done in this regard. Frankly, Sir, you will recall that a very senior and aged Member from Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Kotaiah, used to sit here. Unfortunately, he is no more with us. He used to lament and bring to our notice with passion, with intensity and, I think, with the first-hand experience, what this industry has been going through, over the years. I think that should make us look at this industry in a broader perspective.

I also recall that the last committee, the Satyam Committee, was also referred to many a time in this House. At that time, the Report was not submitted. I have myself not seen the Report. The previous speaker, our friend from Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Radhakrishna Murty, has mentioned that, probably, after Mr. Satyam, somebody else took over the chairmanship. I am not aware of that, and I have not seen the Report either. But I can say that this officer, Mr. Satyam, was the Textile Secretary. I even do not know where he is at the moment and what he is doing. But, having known him for some time, since he had worked with me, I can say that he is certainly a person with both social concern and social conscience.

Having said that, I say that I have not seen the Report. Probably, he might have been influenced by, what he himself said, "the imperatives or the compulsions of globalisation." But that simple factor should not blind us, should not make us oblivious, to the social and economic realities in this country. On the other hand, we have also to think what measures and what safeguards we can devise to retrieve the situation and to see that this precious and valuable industry is really protected. So far as the employment potential is concerned, if I am right, this industry, with such an immence potential, probably, may be next only to agriculture. Then, we have to take all measures.

It is also unfortunate that the Handloom Board which was set up years back with very laudable objectives, has got ritualised. It got-I hate to use the word--bureaucratised, in the sense that somehow or other, more questions were asked than going into the results, and the performance was ignored. I think, it fell into some kind of a trap, and, that is why, it has really outlived its utility. Something much more drastic has to be done. Ministers are taking note of what the hon. Members are saying. I am not aware of the reaction of the Textile Ministry and the Textile Minister after having read the Report.

But, Sir, I have seen at least two Reports on this, the Sivaraman Committee Report and the Mira Seth Committee Report. I think, these Reports were also on the right lines. Probably, they laid down the guidelines for us, by which we could take care of the obligations of liberalisation or the compulsions of liberalisation and, at the same time, strengthen the handloom industry in the country.

Sir, in the first place, I do not see much of a confrontation between the powerloom sector and the handloom sector. The only thing is that one is comparatively weaker than the other. The powerloom sector has been, unfortunately, taken over, not by the persons who were in the powerloom sector or who were directly concerned with it, but by more powerful interests. That is why, this powerful sector should not be allowed to do the arm-twisting or to put the handloom sector to a disadvantage.

Both the industries have a place, from the point of view of foreign market. Sir, you will recall that this industry in the Madras Presidency had earned a name for itself throughout the world, particularly, in the Western world. That is why I say when we could make it at a time when we were at a disadvantaged position, from various angles, why and how is it that we have not been able to give the proper support to the handloom industry to grow? Though we do not like the word "protection", yet we have to protect and support the weaker and vulnerable sections and make this industry economically viable. Only when they are economically viable, the question of their vulnerability, from the point of view of social justice etc. will not be there. That is why I suggest that the Government should come to the House with a clear policy statement, taking into account the place that this industry has occupied throughout the history of this country. I am afraid I do not find myself in agreement with the suggestions made by the last Committee that every kind of support to this industry must be withdrawn. If it is done it will be a disastrous step. For years we have been saying they should be given credit at cheaper rates, besides other concessions. I think we have to think on those lines. Sir, I support the suggestions given by the Mira Seth Committee that there should be a National Credit Fund for them. I think this valuable suggestion has been taken into account in a different form by the mover of the Bill.

Sir, withdrawal of facilities and concessions to this industry will cut at the roots of the handloom industry. This industry is, by and large, concerned with the poor people. It is really the workers' industry, wherein the family workers are not fully employed. On the one hand, we should see that no unnecessary burden is put on the industry, and on the other, the watchful Government should ensure that all kinds of concessions and facilities are provided to the needy sections. It should also ensure that these people because of their economic disparity are not exploited by the sharks who have now taken over the powerloom inudstry. There also we have to

balance the two particular factors. So far as research and development is concerned, this is an extremely important area and this was supposed to be one of the responsibilities for the handloom industry. I would like to state that most of the State Governments and Departments dealing with handloom industry have failed in the area of research and development. Research and Development is extremely important, from the point of view of quality, and quality has something to do with marketing. Apart from that, we have to explore new markets for this industry.

Then, suggest to these poor people, who are deprived of those facilities, what kind of a cloth they should make, what kind of a design they should adopt and so on. I think this task has been neglected, though, I am not fully aware of the recent position in the States. But, earlier, there were a number of institutions of this kind. It seems they also lost their moorings. Probably, their working got ritualised.

That is why I think that another very important area which needs to be focussed is research and development, in order to improve their quality, improve their marketing prospects. Only then, they can face competition; and produce handloom cloth according to the taste of the people. Mr. Vice-Chairman, without taking much of your time, I would like to submit that there is a change all over the world. There is a change in the taste of the people. They don't want synthetic clothes. On the other hand, handloom articles are a rage in the Western countries. When we go abroad, we give small presents to the people. They are accepted. They are highly welcomed. I think, these factors also should be taken into account. The easy path that we sometimes adopt is not something which really behoves this country with such hory traditions of handloom industry.

Sir, I fully agree with the proposal for handloom mart . This is also one of the ways and methods of publicising the handloom ; and many efforts have been made in this direction, very successfully, though, in a limited way, for small-scale industries at different places. So far as the handloom industry is concerned, this is a kind of facility which the Government has not provided. If they provide this facility to this sector, then, we can say that they have really discharged their duty to this sector. Mr. Reddy, the Mover of the Bill, has suggested a Handloom Weavers' Welfare Fund , on the lines of the Development Fund, National Credit Fund, suggested by the Mira Seth Committee. Yes, I am for a Handloom

Weavers' Welfare Fund. But our economic policy, our industrial policy, should be so devised, should be so fine-tuned that this handloom industry is made to stand in competition with any other sector. When I say 'with any other sector', I only mean that when unfair methods are adopted by other sectors and elsewhere, the vulnerability, the difficulties, of this section have also to be taken into account so that they really do not need the help of this welfare fund; there is not much of a need to draw upon this welfare fund. However, a welfare fund is necessary for every section, whether it is the Government servants or any other section, for meeting particular contingencies and emergencies. This should be done. When the Ministry is considering a committee, it is high time they take into account the experience of the handloom industry, what has been said by various committees, from time to time. They should take note of the suggestions that were made; and how far they were implemented, in accordance with various Plan documents.

With regard to the handloom industry, they should come out with a policy statement. which should really help, strengthen and perpetuate the stability of the handloom industry. With these words, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I thank you. I do hope that this can be possible if the Textile Minister convenes a meeting of the various State Textile Ministers because this is also an area where divided responsibility, unfortunately, only spells doom. If there is a proper realisation of the joint responsibilities of both the Union Government and the State Governments, I think a really functional and forward-looking approach to make the handloom industry viable can be adopted.

With these words, Sir, I support Mr. Reddy's Bill. Thank you.

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रूमन्दला (आंध्र प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस भारत देश में बुनकरों की परिस्थिति, उन के चरित्र को पढ़ा जाय तो मालूम होता है कि आज से नहीं बल्कि भारत देश की स्वतंत्रता के पहले भी ब्रिटिश जमाने में सन् 1928 में इन की दशा को सुधारने के लिए रॉयल कमीशन बनाया गया था । उस में कुछ अच्छे सुझाव न आने पर सन् 1941 में एक कमेटी बनायी गयी, फिर 1945 में एक कमेटी बनायी गयी । तत्पश्चात् 1949 में ऑल इंडिया कॉटेज इंडस्ट्री बोर्ड बनाकर बुनकरों को लाभ पहुंचाने की दृष्टि से विचार किया गया और वर्ष 1959 में भी ऐसी कोशिश हुई । इस तरह हर समय आबिद हुसेन कमेटी, मीरा सेठी कमेटी और कई कमेटियां आईं, लेकिन बुनकरों की परिस्थितियों को पूरे तौर पर

समझकर, उन पर दया कर के किसी भी सरकार ने उन के साथ जितना न्याय करना चाहिए था, नहीं किया ।

महोदय, बुनकरों की एक विशेषता है कि हर राज्य में और देश के कोने-कोने में बिना मजहब, बिना जाति या बिना वर्ग के भेद के इस काम मे सभी तरह के लोग लगे हैं । कई माइनोरिटीज लोग हैं, एस.सीज. हैं. एस.टीज. हैं, ओ.बी.सीज. हैं, पूरे देश में गरीब लोग इस कार्यक्रम को चला रहे हैं और अपना जीवन गुजार रहे हैं । लेकिन एक दुख की बात यह भी है कि इन की ज्यादा आवाज सुनाई नहीं देती । अभी सदन में कुछ बुजुर्ग सदस्यों ने बुनकरो के बारे में बात कही । कुछ साल पहले स्वर्गीय प्रागदा कोटैया जो कि इस सदन के सदस्य थे, बुनकरों के बारे में, हैंडलूम के बारे में उन की आवाज को जोरदार ढंग से प्रकट करते थे । महोदय, आज हर राज्य में बुनकर इस कार्यक्रम में लगे हैं और अपना जीवनयापन कर रहे हैं, लेकिन जब भारत सरकार के कोई भी नेता भाषण देते हैं तो उन के लिए हैंडलूम व्यवसाय प्रथम और बुनकर व हथकरघा दूसरे स्थान पर चला जाता है।

महोदय, बजट में किसानों के लिए पैसा दिया जाता है, इस कार्यक्रम में लॉबियों के लिए, यजमानों के लिए, पावरलूम वालों के लिए सहायता दी जाती है, करोड़ों रुपए की सब्सिडी दी जाती है, लेकिन बुनकरो की गरीब दशा वैसी ही है । उस की झोंपड़ी में दिया जलाने के लिए तेल भी नहीं रहता । लेकिन उसे देने के लिए कोई भी सरकार आगे नहीं आ रही है । हाल में आंध्र प्रदेश के मुख्य मंत्री जी ने बुनकरों के जीवन में सुधार लाने के लिए 25 करोड़ रुपए की सहायता दी है । महोदय, अगर आप सत्यम् कमेटी की रिपोर्ट पढ़ें तो पाएंगे कि बुनकरो को झोपड़ी से निकालकर रोड पर लाया जा रहा है । मैं इन सब कमेटियों की रिपोर्ट को ध्यान में रखकर भारत सरकार से विनती करता हूं कि टैक्सटाइल मिनिस्ट्री से हैंडलूम मिनिस्ट्री को अलग रखा जाए । उस के साथ-साथ जितना बजट किसानों के कल्याण के लिए रखा जाता है उतना ही हैंडलूम के लिए भी रखा जाना चाहिए । आज जनसंख्या में जिस तरह बढ़ोतरी हो रही है और गांवों में निरद्योग की समस्या है, उस के निर्मूलन में हैंडलूम उद्योग बहुत सहायता देता है । इस संबंध में स्वतंत्रता से पहले जबकि देश की आबादी के 40 करोड़ में 4 करोड़ बुनकर थे महात्मा गांधी ने बुनकर उद्यमों को राष्ट्रीय चिह्न प्रदान कर बुनकरों का आत्म-विश्वास बढ़ाया था। उस स्वतंत्रता आन्दोलन में भी हमारे बुनकर लोग रात-दिन देश की सेवा करते थे । लेकिन आज, देश के स्वतंत्र होने के बाद, फलने-फूलने के बाद बुनकरों के लिए कुछ नहीं है रहने के लिए झोंपड़ी नहीं है, खाने के लिए खाना नहीं है और पहनने के लिए कपड़ा नहीं है । बुनकर, जो खुद कपड़ा तैयार करके सारे संसार को देता है, अपने पहनने के लिए उसके पास कपड़ा नहीं है, आज यह स्थिति है हमारे देश में ।

मैं आपके माध्यम से भारत सरकार से विनती करता हूं कि जो भी रिपोर्ट तैयार हो, जो भी कार्यक्रम हो, उस कार्यक्रम में जो निपुण लोग हैं, हर राज्य से ऐसे चार-पांच लोगों को बुलाकर उस पर यहां चर्चा की जाए, विचारों का आदान-प्रदान किया जाए, तब ही एक सही पॉलिसी, एक सही विषय, एक सही प्लान सही ढंग से, सही रूप से तैयार हो सकेगा । बुनकर, जो मुश्किल में रहता है, उसके जीवन को सुधारने के लिए यदि कोई दूसरा व्यक्ति कोई रिपोर्ट लिखता है तो वह कहां तक सही हो सकती है । हम भारत सरकार से यह निवेदन करना चाहते हैं कि आज सारे देश में परिस्थिति यह है कि हर राज्य में, हर गांव में, हर मंडल में, हर जिले में बुनकर हैं, बुनकर के बिना कोई प्रांत नहीं है, ऐसे बुनकरों के जीवन में कुछ अच्छा सुधार लाने के लिए सरकार कुछ अच्छे कदम, ठोस कदम उठाए । आज हम एक बिल रख रहे हैं लेकिन इस बिल में कई त्रुटियां हैं, कृपा करके उन पर ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए और देखा जाना चाहिए बुनकरों को पावरलूम वालों से कैसे मिला सकते हैं । पावरलूम वालों की बहुत बड़ी धनवानों की लॉबी है, मिल-मालिकों की बहुत बड़ी धनवानों की लॉबी है, लेकिन बुनकरों की कोई लॉबी नहीं है क्योंकि यह अनऑरगेनाइज्ड सैक्टर है, किसी का कोई मूव नहीं है, वह लड़ नहीं सकता, कुछ भी गड़बड़ नहीं कर सकता । इसलिए अगर एक दिन वह झोंपड़ी में रहकर कपड़ा तैयार नहीं करता है तो उसका पेट नहीं भर पाता । ये बुनकर सभी राज्यों में एक जाति के, एक मत के नहीं हैं एक राज्य में माइनॉरिटी वाले लोग बुनते हैं, एक राज्य में एससी, एसटी के लोग बुनते हैं, एक राज्य में ओबीसी वाले लोग बुनते हैं । गांव में रहने वाले बिना मज़हब के हैंडलूम सैक्टर में अपना जीवन चलाने के लिए ये लोग अपनी पूरी फेमिली के साथ इसमें जुटे रहते हैं कोई रंग में धागा मिलाता रहता है, कोई धागे की सफाई करता रहता है, कोई धागे को ठीक तरह से करता है, उसके बाद लूम पर लाता है और उसके बाद कपड़ा बुनने के लिए तीन-चार जन होते हैं । आपको मालूम होना चाहिए कि आज से 20, 30, 50 साल पहले आंध्र प्रदेश के गदवाल की साड़ी, नारायणपेटा सिल्क, नेल्लूर की वेंकटगिरी साड़ी, गुंटूर की जरी साड़ी और एक-एक जिले से एक-एक विशिष्ट वस्त्र विदेश में भेजा गया था, वारांगल का कारपेट भी वहां पर भेजा जाता है । जैसे यू. पी. में बनारसी साड़ी है, उसी प्रकार कर्नाटक में सिल्क साड़ी है, तमिलनाडु में गरीबों को सहायता करने का कपड़ा तैयार होता है । इस तरह से बेडशीट्स हों, टॉवल्स हों, साड़ी हों, धोती हों या कॉटन हो, बुनकर इस प्रकार के कपड़े तैयार करते हैं । मैं आपको एक बात और बताना चाहता हूं कि अमेरिका में वाइट हाउस में साल में एक दिन भारत का, हिन्दुस्तान का हैंडलूम का कपड़ा डाला जाता है, लेकिन भारत देश के कार्यालयों में हम हैंडलूम के कपड़ों को प्रोत्साहन नहीं देते हैं । आंध्र प्रदेश में एक डी. ओ. निकला हुआ है जिसके अनुसार आंध्र प्रदेश राज्य को हैंडलूम का कपड़ा ही खरीदना है । मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि उसी तरह से भारत

सरकार की तरफ से भी एक डी. ओ. निकलना चाहिए कि जो भी कपड़ा लेना हो 'आकाश' के माध्यम से हैंडलूम का कपड़ा लिया जाए । 'आकाश' भी तालमेल करती है, उसमें पावरलूम का कपड़ा भी लिया जाता है, मिल-मैन का कपड़ा भी लिया जाता है लेकिन उसकी राज्यों में ब्रांच नहीं है । 'आकाश' संस्था बनी तो हैंडलूम के लिए है, लेकिन वह हैंडलूम के वास्ते नहीं है, पावरलूम के वास्ते है, पैसे वालों के लिए है, जो कमीशन देते हैं उनके लिए है । उसकी कोई एजेंसी न राज्यों में है, न मंडलों में है, न जिलों में है । वह क्या करेगी ? वे दो-तीन अफसर बिठाएंगे जो तनख्वाह खाएंगे और जो लोग कमीशन देंगे वे उनका कपड़ा लेंगे तथा सरकार को सप्लाई करेंगे । इससे हैंडलूम को क्या फायदा पहुंच रहा है ? आप राज्य सरकारों के उदाहरण लीजिए, तमिलनाडु का लीजिए, कर्नाटक का लीजिए, आंध्र प्रदेश का लीजिए, केरल का लीजिए । उन राज्यों में जो-जो कार्यक्रम चलाए जा रहे हैं, उनका निचोड़ निकालकर भारत सरकार की टेक्सटाइल मिनिस्ट्री को इस पर विचार करना चाहिए । टेक्सटाइल मिनिस्ट्री से हमें न्याय नहीं मिलता है । मेरी आपके माध्यम से भारत सरकार से यह विनती है कि हैंडलूम के लिए आप एक अलग मिनिस्ट्री बनाइए और उसके लिए एक अलग कमेटी बनाइए । आज किसान के बाद हैंडलूम है लेकिन बजट में देखिए आप no handloom. आज 25,000 करोड़ रुपया टेक्सटाइल मिनिस्ट्री को ऐप्रोप्रिऐशन के लिए दिया तो वे मिल वालों को देते हैं, पावरलूम को देते हैं। हैंडलूम को आपने क्या दिया बताओ ? हैंडलूम को कौन क्या दे रहा है ? इतने महीने, इतने साल हो गए, भारत सरकार ने हैंडलूम के लिए कोई पालिसी बनाई क्या ? हैंडलूम के लिए कोई स्कीम रखी है क्या ? आज से कुछ साल पहले जनता क्लॉथ की स्कीम थी । कुछ गरीबों को बुनने के लिए होता था, कुछ गरीबों को खरीदने के लिए होता था । आज न बुनने वाले के लिए काम है, न खरीदने वाले के पास दाम है । आज भारत में देखिए हर दुकान के बाहर लिखा है 50 फीसदी छूट, 30 फीसदी छूट लेकिन हैंडलूम में कोई छूट है क्या ? पहले एम.डी.ए. स्कीम थी, अब एम.डी.ए. स्कीम भी आप बंद करने जा रहे हैं। यह कहां का न्याय है ? गरीब, जिसका मुंह नहीं है, जिसका पेट नहीं है, जो बात नहीं कर सकता, उस की ओर आज भारत सरकार दया की दृष्टि से नहीं देख रही है ।

मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि इन सब रिपोर्टों को एक दफा देखकर हैंडलूम के साथ कितना अन्याय हो रहा है, इसके बारे में सोचिए और हैंडलूम को प्रोत्साहन देने के लिए कोई योजना बनाइए । गांवों में, जिलों में जो लोग बेरोजगार हैं, इससे उन लोगों को कुछ रोजगार मिलेगा । इससे गरीबों को कपड़ा मिलेगा । आज जो हैंडलूम का कपड़ा तैयार करता है, उसकी मार्केटिंग करने के लिए उसके पास कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है । इसलिए मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि जैसे किसानों के लिए बीज पर, उर्वरक पर,

हर चीज में सब्सिडी दी जाती है **(समय की घंटी)** लेकिन गरीब हैंडलूम वीवर के बोलने के समय भी घंटी बजती है, तुम बैठ जाओ, तुम बात नहीं कर सकते । उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह कहां का न्याय है ? 700 साल से गरीब मर रहा है। उसकी पूरी हिस्ट्री आपके पास है लेकिन उनके लिए कुछ भी करने के बारे में आप सोच नहीं रहे हैं । प्रागदा कोटैया ने हैंडलूम के लिए अपनी जान दी है । उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा आपसे निवेदन है कि भारत सरकार कम से कम उन गरीबों को जो गांवों में रहते हैं, एक आइडेंटिटी कार्ड दे और कुछ धागा वगैरह देकर कुछ सुविधा पहुंचाए । तब गरीब आपको दुआ देगा, वरना वह बददुआ देगा । आप व्हाईट कॉलर के लिए मत रहिए, आप गरीबों के लिए रहिए । उसमें हरिजन भी है, माइनोरिटी भी है, ओ.बी.सी. भी है, दूसरी जाति के गरीब लोग भी हैं और हर राज्य में हैं, हर जिले में हैं । मैं आपके माध्यम से इस बिल को सपोर्ट करता हूं । रेड्डी साहब ने बहुत सोच-समझकर यह बिल यहां प्रस्तुत किया है लेकिन जो सत्यम कमेटी की सिफारिशें आई हैं, वे खतरनाक हैं । भारत सरकार कृपया हैंडलूम के लिए एक अलग मंत्रालय की व्यवस्था करे और उसके लिए अलग से बजट रखे तो अच्छा होगा । धन्यवाद ।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the Members of this House who have participated in the discussion and have given their suggestions about the problems of the handloom weavers. They are facing many difficulties in their field. I appreciate all the Members who have participated in the debate and given their valuable ideas and suggestions.

I would like to say one thing. Handloom is a State subject. The State Government is fully responsible for implementing the schemes. The Government of India is supporting the State Governments, providing so many schemes and giving funds for helping the weavers. Now, our hon. friend has introduced a Bill. He is seeking the support of the House. He has mentioned in this Bill about the non-availability of yarn, assured availability of yarn at concessional rates, welfare measures for the weavers, purchase of handloom products by the Governments, loan facilities for the weavers, constitution of an expert task force and other things. I would like to bring to the notice of this House that the Government is aware of the problems of handloom weavers. The Hank Yarn Obligation Order expired on 31th March, 2000. But our Government issued an order extending its period without specifying any date. I would also like to bring to the notice of the House that, according to this Order, the production of hank yarn must be 50

per cent of the total production of yarn by the industry. It is compulsory. Out of this hank yarn, 80 per cent should be 40 counts or below. Many Members have pointed out that there is a shortage of hank yarn. Many Members have mentioned about the Satyam Committee report. The Satyam Committee submitted its report to the Government. We are carefully considering each point. It has recommended that the Order should be withdrawn. But our Government, keeping in view the interests of the weavers, has already extended the Hank Yarn Obligation Order without specifying any dates. In the light of that Order, the consumption by weavers in the handloom industry, during the last three years, was only 350 million kilograms. The industry produced 500 million kilograms of hank yarn. I would like to bring to the notice of the House that there is no shortage of hank yarn anywhere in India. I think the hon. Members will appreciate it.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI) in the Chair]

I would like to point out to the House that in the current year, that is, 1999-2000, we have produced more than 590 million kilograms of hank yarn. But the utilisation is only 375 million kilograms. I would like to bring to the notice of the House that we have introduced the mill-gate price scheme. We are implementing it effectively through the NHDC, that is, the National Handloom Development Corporation. It has fully borne the transportation cost. We are buying yarn from mills where you will get mill-gate price. We are bearing the transportation cost from mills to the weavers. The weavers need not pay any extra charges. I want to point out for your knowledge that there is no price rise in hank yarn. Again, I want to point out one thing. During the past two years, the price of hank yarn has increased from Rs.88 to Rs. 93 per kg. There is a difference of only Rs. 5. I think you will appreciate it. There is not much difference. There is no shortage of hank yarn anywhere. And our friend, Mr. Reddy, has also pointed out... *(Interruptions)*

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: What about reservations?

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : I will come to the points one by one. It has already been incorporated in the Bill. I will come to the points one by one. Now I come to welfare schemes. So many Members have pointed out about the welfare of weavers. Sir, both Houses of Parliament are very much concerned about the weavers' plight. We are very

much thinking about fulfilling their demands. I want to mention some schemes which have already been introduced. We have already introduced the Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme, the Thrift Fund Scheme, the Group Insurance Scheme, the Weavers' New Insurance Scheme and the Health Package Scheme. I want to point out one thing. Under the Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme, the number of people who are engaged in weaving is about 1.24 lakh; under the Thrift Fund Scheme, 20.2 lakh weavers are engaged; under the Insurance Scheme, there are about 16.8 lakh weavers, and under the Health Package Scheme, 6.8 lakh weavers, during the period from 1992-93 to 1999-2000. I would like to explain some more things about the welfare schemes, as some hon. Members have pointed out about the welfare of the weavers who are engaged in the weaving sector. If somebody dies, and if somebody becomes disabled, they will be benefited by this scheme. I would like to say one thing. *(Interruptions)*

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: It is not a question of compensation, but at the same time...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : The hon. Member has put one question. Has anywhere in India any suicide been attempted due to starvation or has any death taken place due to starvation? The hon. Member is pointing out here that in Andhra Pradesh, 200 workers have committed suicide. I am inviting the attention of all the Members of this House to this fact. This is a serious matter and the Government is very much concerned about this. The Government will take all necessary action. But our Government has already introduced this Group Insurance Scheme. Through the State Government, our Government is implementing this Group Insurance Scheme. And the premium to be paid is Rs.120, which is equally shared by the beneficiary, the State Government and the Central Government. It covers all the weaving sector. Under this scheme, an insurance cover of Rs.10,000 is being given. I would like to mention here that if any weaver contributes towards this Group Insurance Scheme, then he will get a benefit of Rs.10,000. I want to point out to the hon. Members. Sir, I want to mention about one more Group Insurance Scheme, which has covered more than 15 lakh weavers, during the period from 1992-93 to 1999-2000. I would like to mention another scheme, which is the New Insurance Scheme. It is very beneficial for the weavers. The premium of insurance is Rs.120/-and the contribution by the weaver is only Rs.20/-.

Kindly listen to what I am saying. The State Government is giving 40 per cent and the Central Government is giving 60 per cent. It is in operation now. Under the new insurance scheme, if a person dies, then, his family will be given Rs.1 lakh by way of compensation; and, if a person has lost his dwelling on account of flood, fire or some other natural calamity, then, he will get an amount of Rs.10,000. So, the Government is implementing these insurance schemes for the workers in the weaving sector. These workers would be covered under two different schemes, namely, the Group Insurance Scheme and the New Insurance Scheme. Sir, the hon. Members have talked about welfare of the workers. Yes, I am for it. Already, we are giving a lot of benefits to the weavers. I shall mention them one by one. We have started with the Workshed-cum-housing Scheme. For each house in the rural areas, we are giving Rs.7,000 by way of Central assistance, and we are giving Rs.10,000 if it is in the urban areas. And, we also give assistance to the weavers under the Workshed-cum-housing scheme, whereby we give a Central assistance of Rs.18,000 to weavers in the rural areas, and Rs.20,000, if they are in the urban areas. The weavers are covered through various co-operative channels. Apart from the assistance given by the Government, the NABARD is also giving loans and financial assistance. The hon. Member has also pointed out regarding purchase of handloom products. The Government has already established an institution called the Association Corporations and Apex Societies for Handlooms (ACASH), which is purchasing handloom products through various co-operative societies throughout the country, and it will get these products under the Single Tender System (STS). It will deliver the goods to the Central Government organisations like Defence, Railways, Health, etc. I also want to inform the House that through ACASH, the Government purchased Rs.20-40 lakhs worth of handloom products in the year 1999-2000. I hope that the hon. Member will appreciate that the handloom weavers would benefit through these transactions. I also want to bring to the notice of the Government that various trade unions are procuring the handloom products for their respective Departments. The Central Government has also issued orders to the State Governments to buy these products. ACASH is the primary organisation which would buy the handloom products. The hon. Member had also pointed out in this Bill regarding marketing facilities and the connected things. I want to inform the House that the Government is extending assistance to the handloom

weavers by organising some export fares and exhibitions. We are inviting the handloom artisans, the handloom weavers, to participate in the exhibitions to sell their products. I want to point out about Suraj Kund. It is a beautiful place. Every year, we are conducting an exhibition there. The weavers from all over India come here and sell their products. I will come to the next point. Sir, as you know, there are so many marketing complexes in different parts of India like Calcutta, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Kanpur and many other places.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): There are nine places.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : There are so many. In Delhi also, there is the Urban Arts. We have already conducted these exhibitions in Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Agra and Hyderabad - I think the Member may appreciate - on the pattern of Delhi Haat.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T. N. CHATURVEDI): Mr. Minister, what Mr. Reddy means to say is that all these nine places do not constitute India.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : No, no; we will conduct exhibitions in those places. Also, some Members pointed out about the MDA scheme, *i.e.* the Market Development Scheme. It is an important scheme. It is a rebate scheme. Instead of repealing this scheme or instead of wiping out this scheme, we have introduced a new scheme called the Deen Dayal Hastkar Protsahan Programme. It is an important scheme. Instead of the MDA scheme, we are introducing a scheme which gives more incentives to the consumers to buy more goods from the handloom sector. I think this is also an important decision which our Government has taken. I want to take up another matter. We have completed three years. Now, we are in the fourth year of the Ninth Five-Year Plan; I want to bring to your notice - I have already mentioned it -- nowhere in India, in any place, suicides have taken place because of this. There are no starvation deaths of handloom weavers. I want to bring this to your notice. If it is true, kindly...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. Y RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: Are you referring only to the last one week or ten days?

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: For this current year, there is no such report anywhere. I want to point out another thing. You know about the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. So many Members have spoken here about loan facilities, grants, assistance, etc. Through the NABARD we are giving loans, we are giving finance, to the State Cooperative Banks, Central Cooperative Banks and Primary Cooperative Societies who, in turn, give loans to the weavers in the cooperative field. I want to point out one more thing about NABARD. Those who are engaged in weaving, approach the coooperative societies to get loans. They are not having adequate money to deposit the margin money. Hence, our Government, through NHDC, is depositing Rs. 2000 for the weavers. For those who approach us for working capital loan, the Government is giving this kind of assistance. The Members may be aware of this. After depositing Rs.2000, the weavers can get a working loan of Rs.10,000 from the banks, the cooperative societies, the Central cooperative banks in various districts and other places. We are giving this kind of loan to the weavers who are engaged in the handloom sector. Those who are not covered under the cooperative sector, we are looking after their welfare also. Each State Government has its own Stand Handloom Development Corporation. Through these State Handloom Development Corporations, the NABARD is refinancing to the extent of Rs.10,000 through NHDC. Those who are not covered under the cooperative sector, they get this benefit.

Now, I want to talk about the support that we are giving. We have taken a decision regarding the assistance being given by the NABARD. We are giving loan at a rate of interest of 8%, through the State cooperative banks, the Central cooperative banks, the district cooperative banks and the cooperative societies. I think these are very important decisions which the Government has taken. The NABARD, in 1998-1999, allowed a withdrawal of Rs.924 crores to the handloom sector. This year, till February 1999-2000, the withdrawal amount has been of the order of Rs.811.89 crores. I think we are giving more incentives and we are giving more assistance to the weavers, as also loans through the NABARD, which is the main bank for giving this assitance. The hon. Members will definitely appreciate our Government's activities. Our Government is also making so many other incentives available to the weavers through the project package and development of export products and marketing so as to strengthen their

economic base. I want to inform you that through the Handloom Export Promotion Council, we are giving various incentives for export of our handloom products that are produced in various States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and so on. We are giving more incentives and more assistance to the weavers who want to export their products. It is also important that our country earns more and more foreign exchange. Foreign countries, like the European Union and America, are willing to buy our handloom products. We are thinking of exporting more and more goods. As the exports grow, it will also improve the living standards. There is one point about design and training. The Government has set up the National Design Centres at various places. It provides information to the weavers about design, the latest fashion trends and so on, because our weavers do not know much about the new trends. They have been following the old traditions. We have to give them more and more support on this score so that the exports in this sector grow. This is the support that we are giving them through our National Design Centre.

Through the National Design Centre, we are giving support to the weavers. I want to say one thing more. We are having interactive activities with the weavers' service centres and the Handloom Export Promotion Council. We will give more support to the weavers. We will give more ideas and training to the weavers, free of cost.

There was one Shri Deen Dayal who fought for the handloom weavers. The Government has taken an important decision. I think, the Members may be aware of this scheme. We have launched one scheme called the Deen Dayal Hastkar Protsahan Programme, 'Deen Dayal Handloom Improvement Scheme' in English. I want to say that this is an important scheme which covers all matters related to the activities of the weavers. It covers the basic inputs, infrastructure, marketing, revival package, etc.

We regard to the Satyam Committee report, this was an expert committee and they submitted their report. But the Government has rejected the recommendations regarding handloom matters. We have already taken a decision on this. I think, Members may feel happy about it. The Government has taken a decision not to take all the recommendations which have been put before the Government.

4.00 P.M.

The Members may be knowing about the Handloom Act of 1985, which covers 11 items of production reserved exclusively for handloom. With regard to the Satyam Committee, the Government has not taken all the recommendations. To safeguard the interests of the handloom weavers, the Government has taken a decision to continue with the Act; and we have no problem.

I want to say one thing about powerlooms and other things. Somebody said about powerlooms that because of powerlooms, handlooms are being phased out. We are for protecting the powerlooms and we will protect the powerloom weavers. We will also protect the handloom weavers. Our Government has already constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary.

According to the Reservation Act, the Government has taken some action. We inspected 1.6 lakh powerlooms. I want to give you information on important matters. We are taking so many steps against those who are engaged in malpractices in powerlooms. We have inspected 1.5 lakh power looms. Twenty FIRs have been lodged and ten people are convicted. The Members may appreciate this point.

I want to say about hank yarn obligations. I have already mentioned that it should be continued. Another thing that I want to submit is regarding the hankyarn obligation. The hankyarn obligation will continue. There is no problem in it. ...(Interruptions)... The hankyarn obligation should continue. ...(Interruptions)... Reservation has already been announced. ...(Interruptions)... At present, there is reservation for eleven items.. ..(Interruptions)... There are eleven items which are exclusively reserved for the handloom sector. This reservation will continue. There is no problem in it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: Will you bring back it to 22 items as it was earlier? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Not now. ...*(Interruptions)*... We will keep it at eleven. ...*(Interruptions)*.. The Mira Seth Committee will look into this matter. ...*(Interruptions)*... We may consider the suggestions given by the hon. Members. ... The Satyam Committee has pointed out that the handloom sector is in danger. ...*(Interruptions)*... We will consider that aspect. ..*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): The Mira Seth Committee will look into this aspect. ... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, the hankyarn obligation will continue. ... *(Interruptions)*.. It has already been announced. ... *(Interruptions)*.. It will be there without fixing any date. ... *(Interruptions)*... I wanted to bring this to the notice of the House. ..(Interruptions)... Many suggestions have been given by the hon. Members. They have suggested that we should have proper monitoring of our schemes. I would like to inform the hon. Members that at the State level there are Handloom Committees under the chairmanship of the Handloom Secretary of the respective State. They are meeting periodically and giving us their suggestions and recommendations. Sir, we have sanctioned various projects proposals which have come from the North-Eastern and other States. We are giving them more incentives and support. Our Government is taking every step to help the handloom sector. I think the Members may be satisfied with the answer that I have given with regard to this Private Members' Bill relating to the conditions of our weavers. The Government will take every step to revive this sector. The Government will take more steps for the welfare of the weavers. Already we are giving them incentives, grants, assistance and free training. We are also exporting more goods from the handloom sector. We are also purchasing directly from the handloom sector through ACASH and other organisations. I think the Members might be already aware of it. We have taken various other steps to mitigate the problems of the weavers. We have introduced so many schemes to improve the productivity and income of the handloom sector. I think the hon. Members may appreciate all these schemes. The Government has given a budgetary allocation of Rs.135 crores. Last year it was only Rs.85 crores. So, we have enhanced it by Rs.50 crores. I thank the hon. Members who spoke on this Bill. They have made many valuable suggestions. The Government will consider them at an appropriate time. We have also introduced the insurance scheme to provide insurance cover to the workers in the handloom sector. I request the hon. Member to withdraw his Bill.

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला (आन्ध्र प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी सब दे रहे हैं, बहुत धन्यवाद। लेकिन बुनकर जो पूछता है वह नहीं देते हैं यह बड़ी तकलीफ की बात है। उदाहरण के रूप में हमने कहा कि हैंडलूम के लिए एक सेपरेट मंत्रालय रहे। दूसरी बात ...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री टी.एन. चतुर्वेदी) : वह तो ये नहीं करा पाएंगे।

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला : दूसरी बात, हथकरघा के लिए गांवों में रहकर हाथ से बनाने वाले सब वर्गों के लिए एक कोआपरेटिव बैंक रहे। एग्रीकल्चर, बुनकर और हथकरघा इत्यादि मिलाकर, इनके लिए बैंक है। सौ में से 80-90 फीसदी किसानों को देना पड़ता है। कुछ बचे तो हमको देते हैं। इसलिए एक सेपरेट बैंक हथकरघा या सब हाथों से बनाने वालों के लिए, चाहे हैंडीकैप्ड हो, बुनकर हो, कोई हो, कई किस्म के लोग होते हैं, उन सबके लिए मिलाकर एक कोआपरेटिव सेंट्रल बैंक रहना बहुत आवश्यक है। कृपया यह ध्यान में रखें।

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Can I reply?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Yes, you can. But, one question has been raised; when you are helping through NABARD and other agencies, why don't you have a targeted and focussed agency only for handloom?

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, I have already mentioned that all the suggestions given by the hon. Members will be considered from time to time. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Time to time! But when is the first moment of the first... *(Interruptions)*

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला : यही तो खतरे की बात है। 50 साल से हम दबे हुए हैं। कम से कम यह सरकार हमारे साथ न्याय करेगी, यह हम सोच रहे हैं, यह हमारी धारा है, यह विचार है। कृपया कभी-कभी न कहते हुए भी करें। तो आप करें। नहीं तो कल हम कहने में प्रकट करेंगे तो क्या बहुत ही अच्छा होगा?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): I think, this is the suggestion which you should consider at the earliest. When you are giving money, why don't you have a targeted and focussed institution? Before I request Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy to reply , I would like to ask the second question. What is the percentage of weavers who have been covered under the two schemes of insurance? Then I would like to ask, for the information of the House, how many times have the State Monitoring Committees met during the last year in various States? If you have information even for two or three States, I think the House will probably be satisfied.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, the Government is having the figures, and they will be circulated to the Members.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murty, do you want to ask anything?

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for the exhaustive reply he has given. I also thank him for rejecting the Satyam Committee's Report. One thing I would also like to know; what is the percentage of weavers covered by the insurance schemes? Secondly, have you got any estimate of the unsold cloth, lying with various cooperative societies in various States? Our information is that a huge quantity of cloth is lying unsold. That is why they are not purchasing cloth from the weavers, even though they are manufacturing it.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : Sir, some hon. Members have talked about the percentage. On this, I would like to say that so far we have covered 25% weavers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI) : But the problem is of 80%.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN : Also, some hon. Members have pointed that in the case of some cooperatives societies -- whose products are not sold - the stocks are not taken back by the Government. I would like to inform the hon. Members that if there is even a single society like this, kindly bring it to our knowledge. The Government will take necessary action to safeguard the interests of the weavers.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Members, particularly, to those hon. Members including you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, who have participated in this discussion and highlighted the issue of the sufferings of the handloom workers, and compelled the Minister to give some assurances, some positive replies, for the first time, in the House. Sir, I am also thankful to the hon. Minister for his exhaustive and pleasant presentation. He has taken the House to the heaven, but unfortunately, the handloom workers are not taken there. I know that it may take some time. I hope the attempt, the effort and the spirit will not only continue from this moment onwards, but will also increase as time goes on. I expect the Minister will increase his efforts. Sir, I have moved this Bill in this House after seeing the living conditions of the handloom workers in many places. So far the handloom workers were enjoying some benefits, the most important one was the hank yarn. The

hon. Minister has said that it expired on 31st March, 2000. Then he said that the Government has extended it, but he has not mentioned the date up to which it has been extended. I would like to request the hon. Minister to prescribe a date, give at least, five or ten years. The Satyam Committee has recommended that it should be withdrawn. When there is no date, there is always a danger that at any moment, under the pressure of textile mills and others, the hon. Minister may take a decision against the handloom workers.

Sir, so far as the reservation is concerned, I am grateful to the hon. Minister for stating that the Government has rejected the repeal of the Act, as has been recommended by the Satyam Committee. I congratulate the hon. Minister because, it is for the first time, that somebody has said it openly. I think it will be the main heading tomorrow. This thing will be highlighted without mentioning participant member's names. This is good. But again I request that the 22 items - it is now reduced to 11 - which were earlier reserved for the handloom sector should be restored. This is my humble request. Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned a number of schemes. I know there are a number of schemes which are being implemented. The Minister has himself said that a meagre coverage, i.e., 25%, has taken place in so many years. I think at this rate it may take so many years to complete all the handloom workers to redress their grievances. Therefore, I would urge upon the Minister to increase the funds. I also want to seek one clarification from the hon. Minister.

In reply to Question No.3748, dated 16-4-1999, that is, very recently, the hon. Minister has mentioned that for the development of the handloom sector in 1996-97, the Government was kind enough to spend Rs.141.47 crores. The next year, 1997-1998, it has come down to Rs.124.57 crores; and, in 1998-99, it has further come down to Rs.94 crores. Then, sorry. You must pardon us. How should we believe that your promises will be kept? These are the figures given by the hon. Minister very recently, on the 16th of April, 1999. I request the hon. Minister to clarify at least this one, why it has come down from Rs.141 crores to Rs.124 crores and then to Rs.94 crores. At this rate, it will go down further in the coming years. You have already covered 25 per cent of the handloom workers. But, now, you may not cover the remaining workers at all. I humbly request the Minister to give clarification on this also.

The Satyam Committee was constituted by the Government. There are three sectors: the handloom sector, the textile sector and the powerloom sector. The representatives of the powerloom sector and the textile sector have been taken on the Satyam Committee, but they have forgotten the handloom sector, on which lakhs and lakhs of workers are living. He has to explain this also. Of course, he may not be responsible, and this Government may not be responsible for this. But what was the compulsion for ignoring the representatives of the handloom sector and taking only the representatives of the textile sector and the powerloom sector? I need an explanation from him on this also.

I am happy that, now a days, lakhs and lakhs of handloom workers are agitated over the Satyam Committee Report. I think, from tomorrow onwards, they may feel relieved of this danger because of the hon. Minister's commitment, assurance or statement. So, Sir, I thank the Minister. I want the two clarifications, about the reduction in the allocation of funds and this. Let him clarify these things.

Finally, I urge upon the Minister to implement the schemes which he has already announced. Several times, on several occasions, you are saying the same thing in the House. But, in practice, they are not percolating down. You may say that this is the responsibility of the State Governments. I know that it is the responsibility of the State Governments. But it is the responsibility of the Central Government also to oversee what is happening in the States, whether the funds are being utilised properly and whether the funds are reaching the poorest of the poor worker. I would like to have these two clarifications.

With this, I am willing to withdraw this Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T. N. CHATURVEDI): Are you acceding to his request to withdraw the Bill?

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Yes. But, he has to give the two clarifications.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T. N. CHATURVEDI): About the Satyam Committee, the most charitable interpretation or reason he can give is that it was an oversight by whichever was the Government.

About the second point, the Committee is already extinct, finished.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: So far as the handloom sector is concerned, the Government should take decisions, taking everyone into confidence.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): In future, the Government should take the affected sector also into confidence. I think, the Government will remember this point.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the Member who moved this Bill, is seeking clarifications from the Government regarding the Hank Yarn Obligation Order. I want to tell the Members of this House once again that the hank yarn obligation will continue. It will be permanent. We will bring a permanent settlement.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Thank you.

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: There is nothing to hide about it.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Is it permanent?

SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN: It is permanent. There is no problem.

He also asked about the allocation of funds for the handloom sector. I want to say that the previous Government had allotted so much of funds. They might have increased it or decreased it. We are not responsible for it. I think, the Member knows about it. Now, after my assuming the office of the Minister of State in charge of the handloom sector, we have increased the Budget allocation from the last year's allocation of Rs.85 crores to Rs.135 crores this year. During the current year, it has now been increased to Rs.135 crores The Government is now taking greater care to protect the interests of the handloom industry. We have issued a number of orders as protective measures to save them from the mills and powerlooms. I am sure the hon. Members are satisfied with this. I once again thank the hon. Members for their suggestions and request the mover of the Bill to withdraw his Bill.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: I take it as the burial of the Satyam Committee recommendations at the hands of the Central Government so far as the handloom sector is concerned.

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने अभी बताया है कि 20 प्रतिशत हैंडलूम वीवर्स को लाभ पहुंचा है, मेरा निवेदन है कि आने वाले दिनों में वे सदन में इस बारे में विस्तार से बताएं तो अच्छा हो ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री टी.एन. चतुर्वेदी) : मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि समय-समय पर और बहुत शीघ्र ही वे इस पर विचार करेंगे ।

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला : विचार करेंगे, ठीक है, लेकिन वे बताएं कि किन-किन राज्यों में कितने प्रतिशत लोगों को लाभ पहुंचा है ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री टी. एन. चतुर्वेदी) : श्री सोलीपेटा रामचन्द्रा रेड्डी के कहने के बाद मंत्री जी ने यह भी जवाब दिया है कि वे इम्प्लिमेंटेशन का भी ध्यान रखेंगे ।

श्री रामचन्द्रैया रुमन्दला : मैं उन सब बातों से सहमत हूं, उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय । एक बहुत अच्छा और मूल प्रश्न पूछा गया था कि इन सब कार्यक्रमों से हैंडलूम वीवर्स को, कितने लोगों को लाभ पहुंचा है तो उस पर मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि 20 प्रतिशत । मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि बाकी 80 प्रतिशत लोगों को लाभ पहुंचाने के लिए वे कब तक कार्य करेंगे और उन 20 प्रतिशत में भी कौन-कौन से राज्य में कितने प्रतिशत लोग हैं जिन हैंडलूम वालों को फायदा पहुंचा है ? इसकी डिटेल रिपोर्ट अगर वे आने वाले दिनों में सदन में विस्तार से बताएं तो अच्छा हो ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): I hope the hon. Minister would keep the hon. Member's request in view. He says that at this rate it would take another 200 years. I do hope you will be able to do it within two or three years. You should consider the point the hon. Member is making.

The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

THE PROHIBITION OF SMOKING BILL 2000

SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL (Nominated) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the prohibition of smoking of tobacco in any form in places of public work or use and in public service vehicles since smoking has been found injurious not only to the smokers but even more to the non-smokers and to make provision therefor and for other matters connected there with.